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FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA  
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INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 0097  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0641  
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA PRIORITY 0064  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000275

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [ENRG](#) [CVIS](#) [KO](#) [YI](#) [RU](#) [LO](#)  
SUBJECT: FM KUBIS ON KOSOVO, RUSSIA, SERBIA, MISSILE  
DEFENSE, AND VISAS

REF: BRATISLAVA 269

Classified By: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for reasons  
1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary/Introduction: In a frank, productive 90-minute conversation May 9, FM Jan Kubis told the Ambassador that:  
--Slovakia is still with the EU on voting for a Kosovo resolution. Slovakia would like to finesse the language of the UNSCR to avoid direct endorsement for the Ahtisaari plan, but still guarantee the clear result outlined by Ahtisaari. The decision on co-sponsorship would be made closer to a vote.  
--The impasse in forming a new Serbian government could lead to new elections and a greater victory by the Radicals.  
--PM Fico met with a very self-assured and relaxed Putin in Moscow. They discussed the Transpetrol buyback but did not make any commitments.  
--Fico's public comments on Missile Defense emphasize the need for greater consultations with Europe and Russia, but despite the PM's personal objections, Kubis has full authority to decide the GOS position on the presence of Missile Defense in the Czech Republic and Poland. Fico recognizes the sovereign right of Poland and the Czech Republic to decide.  
--Since his return from Washington, Kubis' media message has tried to explain the complexities of the Visa Waiver legislative process and urge Slovaks not to overstay.  
End summary.

¶2. (C) Kubis expressed gratitude for the excellent reception and meetings he got in Washington and New York the week of April 16. He described the meetings as useful, friendly, open, and pragmatic. He was glad he had an opportunity to "explain" to the Secretary and the NSC what some statements from Slovakia and Prime Minister Robert Fico really mean, and what they do not mean, on issues such as Kosovo and missile defense.

Kosovo: Still In Line, with a few Minor Adjustments

¶3. (C) Kubis said it would be premature for Slovakia to commit to co-sponsoring the UN Security Council Resolution on Kosovo, and he urged that we give the Slovak delegation the latest full draft text so Slovakia can have more input. Kubis pointed out that if he agreed to sponsor the UNSCR two months ahead of the vote, it would open a hornet's nest in the Slovak parliament. He emphasized that voting with the EU on the UNSCR would not be a problem for the GOS. In fact, he

was in Qatar May 7 making that very point. In terms of co-sponsorship, however, the underlying message was that we should work on finessing the language in the resolution, and ask again closer to the vote.

¶4. (C) Kubis said Slovakia's only problem with the "13-points paper" (elements of the resolution) was "endorsement" of the Ahtisaari plan. He said the language needed to be finessed to make the outcome clear, but to stop short of directly endorsing the Ahtisaari plan. Slovakia was preparing suggested alternate language, consistent with that in the U.S.-EU Summit document and in PermRep Burian's statement. He thanked the U.S. for the goodwill, understanding, and flexibility in working out these details, acknowledging, "We know we're causing headaches sometimes." The goal is to provide support to the Ahtisaari plan indirectly, for example endorsing UNSYG Ban's recommendation. He mentioned adding preambular language that could refer to the recent UNSC Mission and note that the international community was taking into account the views of Belgrade and Pristina. MFA Political Director Miroslav Lajcak paraphrased that Slovakia can accept "Ahtisaari plus or Ahtisaari minus, but not Ahtisaari period."

¶5. (C) Primarily, Kubis is interested in hearing more about our thinking, saying the language must be finely calibrated to do what we want. He speculated about separating support for the "Comprehensive Proposal for Settlement" from Ahtisaari's "Report" recommending independence. Kubis appreciated that we had flexibility to endorse the Settlement but use lesser language for the Report. He said this might help with the Russians, but he also wondered aloud whether not coming to grips with the issue now would only prolong the agony for several months.

#### Russia on Kosovo

¶6. (C) Fico did discuss Kosovo during his May 4 official visit to Moscow, clarifying in private meetings that Slovakia would vote with the EU on the UNSCR. Kubis said there is definitely a way to bring Russia around. They are dancing on thin ice. They will never endorse the Ahtisaari plan or impose something on Serbia against Serbia's will, but they are looking for a way out. Titov told Kubis this was not about numbers, meaning the substance of the resolution mattered much more in their internal decision-making than did U.S.-EU unity. The Russians would rather not veto but were willing to do so. Ivanov told Kubis, "We wish to agree with our partners on Kosovo, but if we can't, we don't exclude a veto." Kubis also got the impression from a conversation with Lavrov during the Yetsin funeral that the Russians do not believe Kosovo is the top priority issue for the Bush Administration. It is certainly not as important as U.S. cooperation with Russia on other issues like Iran. Lavrov said Russia understood Serbia's future was in the EU and NATO. On UNSCR 1244, Kubis speculated whether it was possible to bring the Russians around through language that did not explicitly abolish it so much as simply creating another resolution to take us to the next stage.

#### Fico's Visit to Russia

¶7. (C) Kubis described President Vladimir Putin as very composed, self-assured, relaxed, even laughing. His messages were strong, but delivered in a calm, relaxed, even gracious manner.

¶8. (C) There was no clarity on the fate of Slovakia's Transpetrol oil pipeline. It was discussed but not decided. Fico asked Putin to use his influence to clear up the legal quagmire so that a sale could go forward. Russian company Gazprom is a leading contender, and Kubis admitted that the Russians have the most control over the outcome. Nonetheless, he said Economy Minister Jahnatek raised Slovakia's four conditions for a sale, like a mantra, at meetings at every level.

¶9. (C) Kubis replayed a conversation he had with Igor Ivanov,

whom he has known for many years and with whom he has very frank discussions. Ivanov lamented a real problem of miscommunication with partners in the West. There are good meetings at the top levels, but no channels for negotiation, preparation, implementation. Non-political issues become politicized. The channels are not working, neither with the U.S. nor with the EU. Mistakes are being made on all sides. Ivanov even admitted that Moscow went too far with its threats about the CFE treaty, but now it has become Putin's line, and it is too late to fix. Upcoming elections in both the U.S. and Russia will box us in for another year or two, Ivanov told Kubis.

#### Missile Defense

¶10. (C) Based on both Fico's comments in Moscow--that he personally opposed U.S. plans for missile defense in the Czech Republic and Poland, would never allow MD on Slovak territory, and that Putin had threatened to aim Russian nukes at U.S. missile defense facilities in Europe--and additional headlines from Fico's May 9 Austria trip criticizing insufficient consultation on MD, the Ambassador cautioned Kubis that Fico's unhelpful comments were getting old. These were gratuitous shots at the U.S., since we had never asked Slovakia for anything. Kubis said he understood our concern, but he defended Fico's line about insufficient consultation, saying that it was a common refrain in Europe. Mainstream Europeans are ambivalent. The perception of lack of greater consultations "gave the Russians a chance to play with all of us."

¶11. (C) Kubis pointed out that in all official meetings, Fico emphasized that the GOS position on MD will respect Slovakia's commitments as a NATO member, that Kubis was representing the government's policy on this issue, and that it was the sovereign right of the Czech Republic and Poland to decide. Kubis said Fico could have cut him off any number of times, but the PM only expressed support: "This is my foreign minister, and he speaks for the GOS policy." Kubis said that Fico is a politician, and his voters expect a certain line, but he was really trying to control himself

within certain limits.

¶12. (C) In Fico's meeting, Putin laughed out loud when talking about missile defense, asking rhetorically if the Americans really thought the Russians were so naive. He said it would be a dangerous game to bring nuclear weapons into Central Europe, where currently there are none, and that MD was part of a U.S. strategy to install an automated system of nuclear weapons. He told Fico that the U.S. had offered to test the system against Russian missiles, to make sure it works. Then, with no humor at all, Putin calmly said, "So if they (American MD facilities) come, we'll point our missiles at them." Kubis said, "I'm not sure the Russians are bluffing. So now it's coming back to Europe, two nuclear states targeting us."

#### Serbia

¶13. (C) Kubis interprets the new head of parliament's election as Kostunica's final warning shot to Tadic, "Give me everything I want or I will go with the Radicals." However, Tadic's own political supporters will never allow this. Kubis and his team are worried that events in Serbia are leading to new elections that will result in gains for the Radicals. On the one hand, this will relieve Kostunica and Tadic of responsibility for losing Kosovo, but it will not lead to a brighter future for Serbs.

#### Visas

¶14. (C) The Ambassador cautioned Kubis about being too optimistic about Visa Waiver legislation in the Homeland Security Bill. Kubis said he well understood the legislative complexities, and in his media appearances since his return from the U.S. he had tried to explain the situation, in addition to urging Slovaks not to overstay. As a result,

Slovaks had criticized him for not fighting hard enough for visa-free travel, but Kubis would keep to his message.  
VALLEE